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LAFAYETTE VISTAS

Road & Drain Highlights

PROGRESS REPORT: In future issues of Lafayette Vistas, look for a progress report on road and drain repairs and replacement. The report will be an easy-to-read table outlining the projects in their different stages of completion.

SIGN OF THE TIMES: As each road or drain improvement commences, the City will post a sign at each site. Look for these signs around Lafayette to keep abreast of the progress.

RIBBON-CUTTING: All residents are invited to the kick-off of Lafayette's road & drain improvement projects on July 10 at 6:30pm. The ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held at the Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Rd., near the site of the first major repair. Mayor Gayle Uilkema will officiate the ceremony. Let the work begin!

THANK YOU: The passing of Measure C to resuscitate Lafayette's roads and drains is the culmination of 2½ years of research, budgeting, meetings, and door-to-door canvasing, carried out by dozens of residents, three volunteer committees, civic groups, businesses and city employees. The City Council would like to formally thank the following key individuals and organizations for their tireless efforts: Members of the Lafayette Finance Committee, the Capital Projects Assessment Committee, the Capital Projects Funding Committee, John Lancaster, Bill Ramage, John Larson, Don Lively, Carl Piercy, Jim Todhunter, Carol Olson, Lynn Thorsen, Claude Hutchison, Glenn Seaborg, Shirley Henry (Lamorinda Press), Lafayette Homeowner's Council, Lafayette Taxpayers Association, Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, Heritage Better Homes and Gardens, Pacific Union, Better Homes Realty, Barcelona Properties, Douglas Thomas Properties, GTE Mobilnet, and Kemper Real Estate Management.

Road & Drain Tax Passes

Over two-thirds of Lafayette's voters decided to reverse the terminal decline of Lafayette's infrastructure by voting yes on the Lafayette road and drain tax in March. 69% of the voters, or 3,767 people, approved Measure C, which will tax homeowners $21 per $100,000 in assessed property value annually. Lafayette property owners will contribute an average of $49 per year to be used exclusively for road and drain improvements. Over a 30-year period, the measure will generate $5-$13 million, depending on how property values increase.

The heavy winter rains of '95 illustrated the acute need for road and drain rehabilitation. With a life expectancy of 20-40 years, the aging roads and drains of Lafayette have outlasted their effectiveness and are now in a state of disrepair and, in the worst instances, virtual collapse. Prior to the vote, Pam Stuebgen, a Happy Valley resident who suffered several thousand dollars in water damage this past winter, summed up voter sentiment.

"Quite frankly, I am tired of driving down a river," says Stuebgen. "As I see it, we would all benefit from the improvement and if the measure doesn't pass, we'll all be back to fighting our own single battles. Working together is the only way to go."

Now that the financial support of the residents has been committed, Lafayette is gearing up for the work ahead. With professional financial guidance from Sutro and Company, the City staff has arranged for the sale of municipal bonds to fund the project work. Bonds are scheduled to go on sale June 20, 1995 and should raise an initial $5 million.

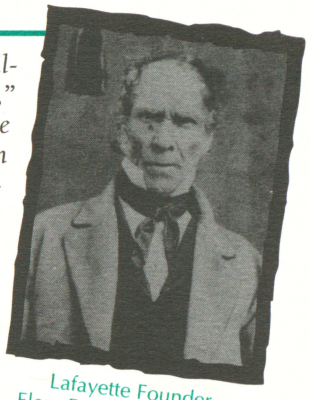
Thirty-three major capital projects are slated to begin in the 1995/96 fiscal year, including:

- Resurfacing of Brook Street
- Improvements to Hidden Valley Rd, Middle Rd, and Diablo Rd
- Dolores Drive improvements
- Condit Road overlay
- Resurfacing of Sierra Vista (Robles Court/Serrano Court)
- Windsor Drive overlay
- Dyer Drive storm drain
- Mosswood Drive/Webb Lane drainage improvements
- Old Tunnel Road drain
- Rohrer Drive drain.

Historic Snapshots

Part 1: Elam Brown Arrives

Welcome to the first installment of ***"Historic Snapshots,"*** *a new column that will be featured periodically in Lafayette Vistas. These snippets of history are written to pique your interest, instill civic pride and encourage you to learn more about the rich history of Lafayette. The first snapshot features Elam Brown, the first Yankee settler in Lafayette.*



Lafayette Founder Elam Brown, 1797-1889

Our story begins in May, 1846 with a wagon train of 14 families and 16 covered wagons heading west from Platte County, Missouri. The wagon train was led by Elam Brown, a newly widowed 49-year-old with 4 children and a good dose of wanderlust. After the six-month journey, which was fraught with many hardships, Brown married fellow traveler Margaret Allen, whose husband died on the trek west. Allen had 11 children.

(continued on back page)

Got Rats?

Call Vector Control for Free Advice

Thanks to excessive winter rains followed closely by the onset of summer, Lafayette's rodent population has been making personal appearances around town. The rains forced local rats to relocate, making them more visible. And in the extended days of summer, with a plentiful supply of ripening fruits and vegetables, rats are often out in the open to feed, especially at dusk.

"It's difficult to estimate the rat population because we do not keep records of sightings," says Elayne Azevedo of the Contra Costa Mosquito and Vector Control District. "We do get more calls with winter rains, and also in the summer because people are outdoors later into the evening when rats come out to feed."

The two most common rats found in Lafayette are the Roof Rat and the Norway Rat. The Norway Rat, more commonly known as a sewer rat, nests underground, while the Roof Rat nests above ground. Stretching up to 19" from head to tail, these menacing-looking rodents are not particularly aggressive, just hungry. Treat rats as you would a skunk or opossum. Wild animals can carry disease. To deter rats, remove all food and water sources from your yard and garage. When their natural habitat is disturbed, rats also search for new shelter. Keep potential rat dwellings, such as palm trees, juniper bushes and ivy, well trimmed.

To assist you in reducing the rat populations around your home, Vector Control offers free advice. An inspector from Vector Control will come to your home and give suggestions on how to combat rats. To set up a home visit, call 685-9301. For free literature, ask for extension 133.

(Vector Control also offers helpful hints on how to evict ground-nesting yellow jackets and provides free information on ticks and Lyme Disease.)

Keep Our Creeks Clean

The deluge of winter has filled Lafayette's six creeks to near capacity. Winding through 1,000 individual properties, the brimful waterways need little inducement to change their natural course and cause damage along a new path. To keep the creeks in check, residents are encouraged to remove debris from the creeks and consult a professional (and be sure to check to see if a permit is required) before electing to do any significant maintenance work.

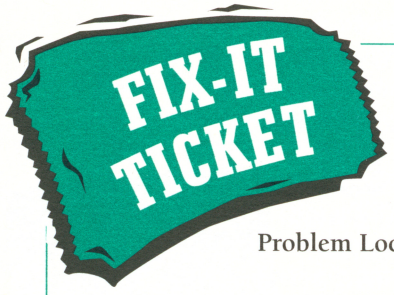
"It is extremely important to allow the creeks to follow their natural course," says City Engineer Mark Lander. "Rocks, broken concrete and lawn clippings should not be put in the creek. Material placed in the creek will be carried down stream, build up and damage adjacent property."

Even natural debris, such as silt and mud, can clog creeks. In addition to pulling rubbish from the creeks, Lander suggests that homeowners encourage their neighbors not to use waterways as dumpsters for anything, including food scraps. These seemingly benign articles can cause creeks to overflow.

Creek maintenance or repair work on personal property may require a permit from the State Department of Fish and Game. The obvious concern is for preserving the creek's natural habitat. A change made on an individual's property can impact everyone and everything within the entire reach of the creek. Lander also welcomes the opportunity to work with residents who are considering a creek improvement.

"We would be happy to work with residents who are planning creek repairs," says Lander. "Our hope is that improvements can meet the needs of the community and the natural course of the creek."

Lafayette is fortunate to have six scenic creeks that pass within its boundaries, including: Las Trampas Creek, Reliez Creek, Happy Valley Creek, Lafayette Creek, Old Jonas Creek and Grizzly Creek.



Here's your opportunity to issue a **Fix-It Ticket** to the City of Lafayette. Just fill out the following check list and mail, fax or deliver it to: **City of Lafayette**

FAX: 510-284-3169

Physical Address:
Desco Plaza #210
3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Lafayette, CA 94549

On-line Address:
Lafay1968@AOL.com

Mailing Address:
City of Lafayette
P.O. Box 1968
Lafayette, CA 94549

Problem Location(s):

_____

_____

Please fix the following:
(check the appropriate boxes)

Streets or Roads
- ☐ Hole
- ☐ Loose gravel
- ☐ Bump
- ☐ Poor drainage

Landscaping
- ☐ Overgrown
- ☐ Blocks traffic signs
- ☐ Obstructs sidewalk
- ☐ Blocks intersection

Sidewalks
- ☐ Hole
- ☐ Crack
- ☐ Bump
- ☐ Tree roots

Street Lights
- ☐ Lamp out
- ☐ Reflector damaged
- ☐ Pole damaged
- ☐ Globe damaged

Traffic Signals or Signs
- ☐ Bent
- ☐ Missing
- ☐ Needed

Street Signs
- ☐ Bent
- ☐ Missing
- ☐ Needed

Playgrounds
- ☐ Equipment broken or vandalized
- ☐ Hazardous conditions

Misc: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Phone #: _____

Ride Sharing, Trip Linking Saves More Than Money

For most of us, automobiles represent a relatively inexpensive and convenient mode of transportation. But there are many other ways to get where we're going that are less expensive, more beneficial to the environment, even better for our health. However, these multiple methods of travel are difficult to embrace because they require us to break from old, comfortable routines.

Juliet Shanks, Lafayette's Transportation Demand Management Coordinator, urges residents to tear away from the one-car, one-person, one-trip habit, even if it's just one day a week. Residents can use BART, carpool neighborhood kids to school, vanpool, take County Connection, bike or walk to work. Collectively, one day a week can make a big difference to our pocketbooks, traffic congestion, and the environment.

The benefits of sharing a ride are many. However, the money-saving feature continues to be a powerful inducement. Ride sharing five days a week can save up to $280 a month, taking into account gas, tolls, parking, insurance, depreciation, and wear and tear on your car. Some insurance companies even give discounts if you don't drive your car to work.

If you travel more than 20 miles one-way to work, consider vanpooling. It's economical and also provides commuters with free time during the ride. The average Bay Area vanpool carries 13 people and commutes 88 miles round-trip. That commute for a solo driver costs about $580 a month. Vanpool riders pay a monthly fare of about $90. Many vanpool participants also receive an annual state tax credit of up to $480.

If your business keeps you closer to home, consider walking, biking and "trip linking." According to the Bay Area Quality Management District, non-commuters make up 75 percent of all motor vehicle trips and motor vehicles are the number one source of air pollution in the Bay Area. The best way to reduce auto pollution is to minimize cold starts. A cold car, one that has been sitting for an hour or more, emits up to five times more pollution than a warm car. By linking trips or errands and keeping your car engine warm, you can avoid cold starts. A quick, one-mile trip to take a child to school emits up to 70 percent as much pollution as a 10-mile excursion with several stops.

Since our driving behavior directly impacts the quality of life in our community, residents are encouraged to try a commute alternative, even if it's just one day a week. Together, we can reduce traffic congestion, air pollution and save money at the same time!

A Handy List of Transportation Options and Information

- BART: 933-BART
- Bikes on BART. Call Office of Passenger Services: 464-7127 (Permitted with some restrictions.)
- County Connection: 676-7500
- Park and Ride Lot: 800-755-3032
- Rides for Bay Area Commuters: 800-755-POOL or 415-861-7665
- Lamorinda School Bus Program: 299-3299
- Carpools For Schools: 284-3826
- Vanpools: 415-861-7665
- East Bay Bicycle Coalition: 452-1221
- Trip-Linking Tips: 1-800-HELP-AIR
- Lafayette Park & Ride Lot in Lafayette Christian Church: 800-755-3032 584 Glenside Drive

Discount BART Passes

$32 passes for $30 are available at the following Lafayette locations:

- Safeway • 283-0228 3540 Mt. Diablo Blvd.
- Lucky's • 283-6960 3502 Mt. Diablo Blvd.
- San Francisco Federal • 284-3652 3614 Mt. Diablo Blvd.
- Lafayette Community Center 500 St. Mary's Rd. • 284-2232

Around Town

July 10 **ROAD AND DRAIN RIBBON CUTTING** – Come celebrate the passage of the Road and Drain Tax and witness the completion of the first project funded, in part, by the bond. Meet at 6:30 pm at the Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Road.

June 20-July 28 **SUMMER FUN 1995!** – Lafayette's Parks and Recreation Department presents a wide variety of programs for children entering Kindergarten through 8th grade. The programs run from 9:00 am to noon, with afternoon Adventure Camp from noon to 5:00 pm. To register, contact the Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Road, 284-2232.

June, July, August **LAMORINDA SCHOOL BUS ENROLLMENT PERIOD** – Kids who want to ride the bus during the next school year must enroll in advance, on a first come, first serve basis. Cost for a full-year, round trip fare is $240. Enrollment forms are available at the city offices, 284-1968.

July 22 **CARS AND STARS PREVIEW PARTY** – Mingle with Lafayette's most at this elegant kick-off to the Concours D' Elegance. This year's party will be held at the Michael Stead Mercedes dealership. For more information, call the Chamber of Commerce at 284-7404.

July 23 **CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE** – Lafayette's biggest annual affair and fundraiser for local charities and the Chamber of Commerce. Inspect beautiful vintage autos and bump into old neighbors and friends. For information call the Chamber of Commerce at 284-7404.

July 28 – Aug. 11 **FILING PERIOD TO RUN FOR CITY COUNCIL** – If you are interested in running for city council in November's election, call the City Clerk at 284-1968. Three seats will be contested.

July 29 **COTTON PATCH QUILT FAIRE** – Did you know that the sewing shops on Brown Avenue attract quilters from all over the Bay Area? Visit Lafayette's second annual Quilt Faire to view our local handicrafts. For more information, call the Cotton Patch at 284-1177.

Historic Snapshots

Continued from front page

Within days preceding the ill-fated Donner Party in October 1846, the Brown Party safely crossed the Sierra Nevadas. While continuing their journey deeper into the West, some members of the wagon train selected the Santa Clara Valley as its final destination. With the onset of winter and the war with Mexico, this was a period of pure survival.

In the spring of 1847, Brown was hired to "whipsaw" redwoods near present-day Moraga. While delivering lumber to San Francisco by ox team then by boat, Brown learned of a 3,300 acre parcel that was for sale within an easy ride from where he was working. The seller was William Leidesdorff, a San Francisco land trader. Leidesdorff had never seen the property and had only recently acquired it from Candelaro Valencia as payment on a debt.

Brown's new wife financed the purchase with $900 she had stashed among her possessions on the trip west. Leidesdorff rounded out the $900 deal by giving Brown 300 head of cattle. In February 1848, Brown moved his family onto the property called Rancho Acalanes.

The land was in the heart of a valley "as green as Missouri, but a whole lot prettier," wrote Brown. Today, Rancho Acalanes would encompass a good portion of Lafayette and straddle much of Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Brown quickly sold off 372 acres to his friend, Nathaniel Jones, for $100. At first, the area where Jones settled was called Pleasant Valley, then Jones Valley. Finally, local folks settled on Happy Valley. For years prior to the arrival of the pioneers, this lush oak-studded locale was home to the Coastal Miwok Indians, and later to the Spanish and Mexicans.

It was on Rancho Alcalanes that Brown lived until his death at age 92 in August 1889. Even the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill did not weaken Brown's resolve to stay put. During his years on the ranch, Brown was a wheat farmer, a flour mill owner, a rancher, a civic leader and a Statesman.

When the United States and Mexico settled the war, the state of California began to take shape. As the owner of a large ranch, Brown was considered the "alcalde" or mayor of the district and was invited to help frame California's constitution. For two terms, he was the county's first legislator. He was later urged to run for the State Senate, but declined. Preferring to devote his time to his ranch and the growing neighborhood around him, Brown worked with the other pioneers in the area to lay the foundation for the community.

The Root Ranch in Happy Valley. The original Nathaniel Jones farm purchased from Elam Brown about 1849.

Next Issue: Naming The Town

Photos were provided by and printed courtesy of the Lafayette Library Historical Archives.

City Directory

Officers

Gayle B. Uilkema	**Mayor**
Ivor Samson	**Vice Mayor**
Anne Grodin	**Council Member**
Donald L. Tatzin	**Council Member**
Judy Garvens	**Council Member**

The City Council meets at 7:00 pm on the second and fourth Monday of the month at the Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Road.

Staff

Robert F.D. Adams	**City Manager**
Steven B. Falk	**Assist. City Manager**
Niroop K. Srivatsa	**Planning Director**
Mark Lander	**City Engineer**
Jennifer Russell	**Parks and Recreation Director**
Ed McNair	**Public Works Superintendent**
Sue Jusaitis	**City Clerk**
Gregg Moore	**Police Services Mgr.**

City Offices and Police

Street Address:	**3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Suite 210**
Mailing Address:	**P.O. Box 1968 Lafayette, CA 94549-1968**

City Telephone Numbers

Administration:	**284-1968**
Engineering:	**284-1951**
Planning:	**284-1976**
Parks and Rec:	**284-2232**
Public Works:	**283-6271**
Senior Services:	**284-5050**
Police Business:	**284-5010**
Police Emergency:	**911**

LAFAYETTE VISTAS

is published for the residents of Lafayette and reports on issues, people and events that affect our city. As a member of this community, you are encouraged to contact us with your questions and comments. We request all correspondence be sent to:

Steven Falk, Editor, Lafayette Vistas
City of Lafayette
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510-284-1968 • FAX: 510-284-3169
On-Line: Lafay1968@AOL.com

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